

CLAIMS :

1. A method of switching from a first video sequence to a second one, both old and new sequences being composed of pictures of type $T = I, P$ or B according to the fact that said pictures are independently coded, or predicted from earlier I or P pictures, or bidirectionally predicted from earlier and later P pictures and/or I pictures, wherein an additional sequence of k pictures is inserted at the switching point between the two sequences, k having a value sufficient in order to have compatible sequences and said additional pictures being coded with a few number of bits.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the following steps are successively implemented :

(a) the old sequence to be replaced by the new one is cut on a P picture, at a first switching point, and a sequence of k minimal P pictures is then inserted ;

(b) after this sequence of additional pictures, at a second switching point said new sequence is inserted.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein said sequence is a sequence of k uniform colour pictures.

4. A method according to claim 2, wherein said sequence is a sequence of pictures that are copies of a previous I or P picture.

5. A method according to anyone of claims 2 to 4, wherein the following additional steps are implemented after the steps (a) and (b) :

(c) said second sequence is cut at a third switching point, in order to be replaced by the first one ;

(d) at said third switching point, additional pictures are similarly inserted until the first old picture to occur is an I picture, the first old sequence being then re-inserted.

6. A method according to anyone of claims 1 to 5, wherein, each time a B picture is predicted from a P picture not included in the same group of pictures, the first B pictures of any group of images are replaced by minimal B pictures at transitions.

7. A method according to anyone of claims 1 to 6, wherein said old and new video sequences are bitstreams encoded according to the so-called MPEG-2 standard.

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